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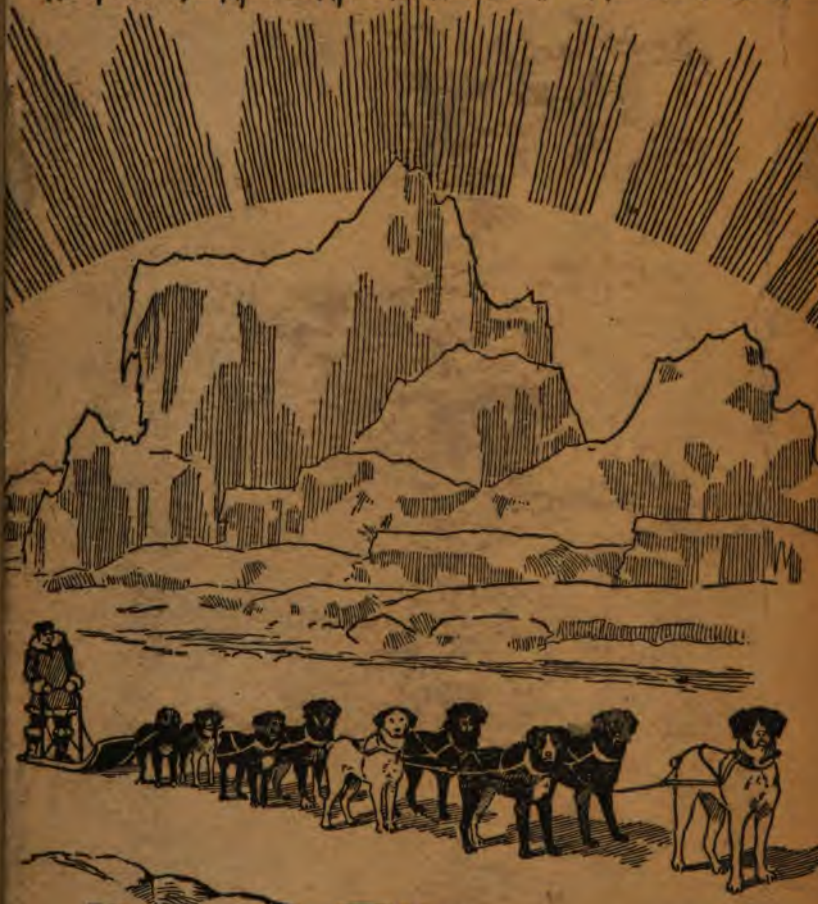
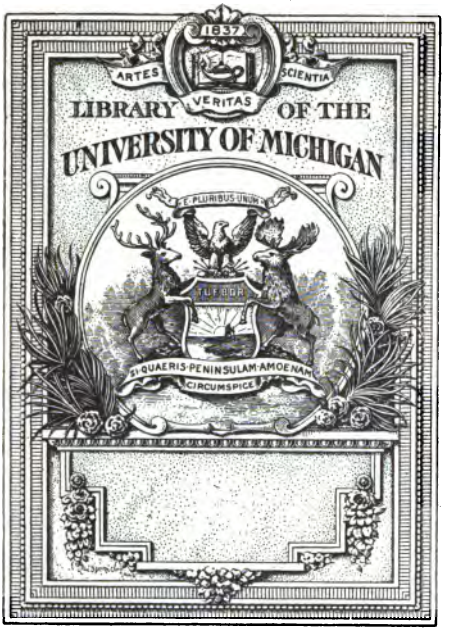
UP IN ALASKA



Esther Birdsall Darling
Nome, Alaska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Up In Alaska

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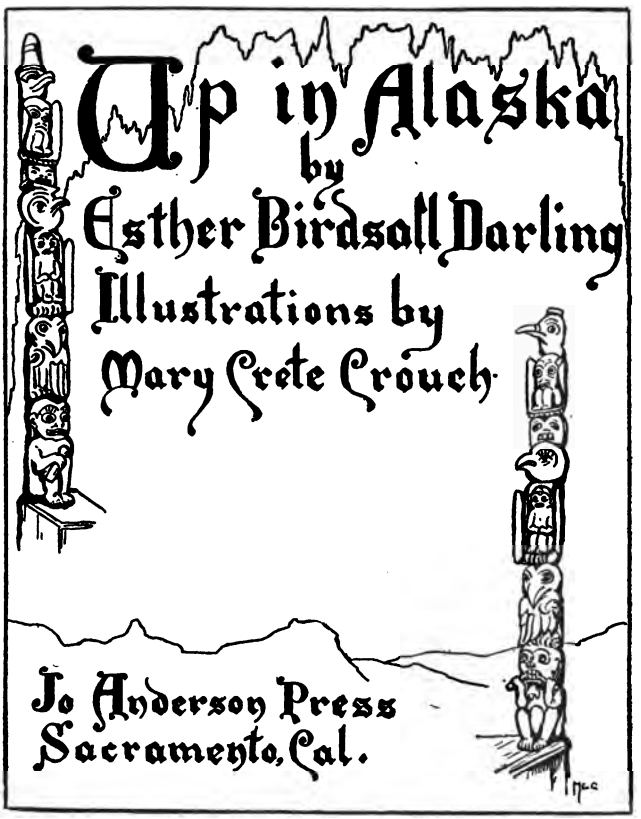
Up in Alaska
by
Esther Birdsall Darling
Illustrations by
Mary Crete Crouch
Jo Anderson Press
Sacramento, Cal.

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TO The Alaskans

Who, regardless of Creed or Nationality, Poverty or Wealth, recognize a Brotherhood that needs no Rules, that sees no Limitations — "The Brotherhood," as Robert Service so truly calls it, "Of Men that Know the North."

To the Dogs

I pledge the Health of Good Fellows—
The Friends who are stanch and true—
And I do not care if it's "Prosit" and Beer,
Or Sparkling Champagne "à vous."
I'm ready for "Skol" with the Norseman,
With the Boys in Blue here's "How"—
But with every real Alaskan,
Let it be "To the Dogs—Bow wow!"

The Sourdough

If you've lived up in Alaska,
Where the Arctic breezes blow,
Till you've seen the Autumn ice come,
And you've seen the Spring ice go,
And survived one long dark winter
When the Mercury ran low,
You can drop the name "Checkako"
And become a "Sourdough."

If you've planted in your garden
By a swift and dextrous throw,
Many demijohns and bottles
In the drifts of deep white snow,
And in May you are not speechless
When you find the soil can grow
Mammoth crops of "Lemps" and "Lacey"
You're a seasoned "Sourdough."

If you have no tender feeling,
And with pride you do not glow
When you take out last year's headgear,
With its feather, quill or bow,
Knowing there's a tragic moment
When the first boat deals the blow
That your clothes are prehistoric,
Then you are a "Sourdough."

If you listen to the wailing
Of the Malamutes who throw
In their voices all the wildness
Of a wolf in deepest woe,
And it soothes you into slumber
Like a sweet song soft and low,
You can feel that you belong here,
And you are a "Sourdough."

If you say "Mush on" and "Peluk"
Somewhat carelessly to show
That you understand the trail talk
And some words of Eskimo,
Then remark, "The air is balmy;
Only thirty-five below,"
Everyone will surely tell you
You've become a "Sourdough."

If you find you've lost your memory,
  And you little care or know
All the great things men are doing
  Far beyond the ice and snow,
And you feel, in spring, that lemons
  Handed even by a foe,
Would look to you like peaches,
  Then you *are* a "Sourdough."

Robert Service

An Appreciation

The North, it is yours through his verses—
  With him you can follow the Trail,
And exult with those who fight and win,
  Or suffer with those who fail.

Though you sit by the glowing embers,
  In the warmth of your "ain fireside,"
You shall feel the chill of the icy blast,
  As it sweeps the tundra wide.

Your eyes shall turn from the shaded lamp,
  To the calm of the still clear night,
And a ghostly splendor shall hold you fast
  In the spell of the Northern Light.

Your ears shall be deaf to the rumble
  Of the traffic that passes by,
And shall hear in the Arctic stillness
  The wolf dog's distant cry.

You shall know the lure of the trackless snows,
  The mountain and frozen sea—
And your soul shall forget its petty cares,
  Its paltry aims, and be free.

You shall feel the passions of primitive men,
The fever and lust for gold
That risks disaster upon the trail,
And death in the bitter cold.

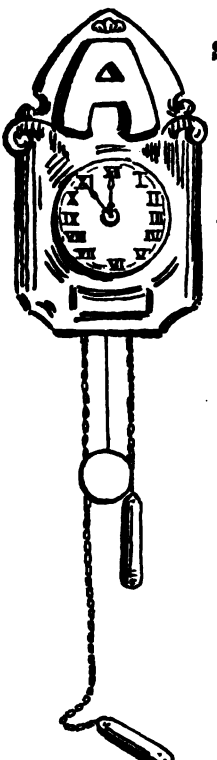
Perhaps, in the shade of a stately palm,
'Neath a sky of cloudless blue,
He has made his North seem real to you,
And you feel that his tales ring true.

But if you have lived in this snow swept land,
His verses are part of your life—
His men are your friends and your comrades,
Their struggles are yours and their strife.

And you know that wherever your lines be cast,
Wherever you wander forth,
You will feel with him those strange strong bonds
Of the "Brotherhood of the North."

Toast to Elks—1908

(Read as the Eleven O'clock Toast at the Ball Given by the Elks' Club of Nome, January 12, 1908)



S the mystic hour approaches,
When the hands of time stand still,
That the hearts of Elks, responsive,
May feel a world wide thrill,
We rise and drink to them standing
And wherever they may be,
Go the greetings of their Brothers
Who are "North of Fifty-three."

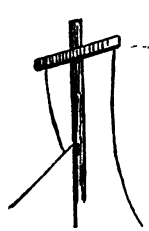
Here may stop the law of God or man,
But you know from out your soul
That the zone of all good Brotherhood
Will reach from Pole to Pole.
When our old friend, Rudyard Kipling,
Wrote of distant Mandalay,
The land where maids are dusky
And the flying fishes play,

He paid a hearty tribute
To the deep and constant thirst
Which is rampant in that country
"Where the best is like the worst."
And I only wish that Kipling
Might be here in Nome today—
I think he'd write far finer verse
Than that on Mandalay,

And he'd tell in rhythmic numbers
Of the town on Bering Sea,
Where the thirst makes that of Suez
Look a paltry "twenty-three."
He could write of the old world vineyards,
Of the amber grape of France,
Of the German beer with its creamy foam,
Of the native "Hootch" perchance;

And he'd prove that the virtues of every land
From the Nile to the terraced Rhine,
That the fire of the South and the strength
of the North,
Are ours while we drink this wine;
This wine, which takes to the absent Elks,
No matter where they roam,
The wireless message of love and cheer
From the hearts of the Elks in Nome.

And here, in the "Great White Silence,"
  Now gay with our mirth and song,
Where the popping corks make music,
  And the happy laugh rings long,
We turn this night to our Brothers
  Beyond the Frozen Sea,
And we drink to them—a Bumper—
  Wherever they may be.



Spring in Nome

I dream of the May of a vanished year,
And the lure of the South is with me here—
The charm of a day in sunny Spain,
When I watched with a joy akin to pain
Granada's walls, the tall gray tower,
The far-off church at the sunset hour,
Where the sound of the Angelus, soft and clear,
Fell like music upon my ear.
I dream of Japan in a long gone May,
Where little maids, in bright array,
Looked quaintly out of their almond eyes
And fluttered like mammoth butterflies,
Through the cloudy pink of the cherry trees,
Whose blossoms swayed in the gentle breeze.
And May in the gardens of old Stamboul,
Where the wind from the Golden Horn blows cool,
And the perfume of Jasmine fills the air,
And the sea is blue and the sky is fair.
Or spring in a narrow Arab street,
Where lean brown men from the Desert meet,
And shadowy white-veiled women fade
Into the dusk of the palm trees' shade.
And spring in Venice, where each lagoon
Is a silver path for the rising moon,

Where in the warm still night you hear
The distant cry of the gondolier.
And England's May with its Hawthorne sweet,
And the nightingale's song in the ripening wheat;
And the glories of May in the Sunset Land,
With the yellow poppies on every hand,
Where spring eternal seems to wait
And linger long by the Golden Gate.
These mem'ries haunt, yet I wake in Nome,
And I find that only in dreams I roam,
And I see instead of the bud and bloom
The lengthening days and the winter's doom;
The sooty snow as it melts away,
The old tin cans with their labels gay;
The ashes and bottles and broken things
That May in this Northern City brings.
And we hear the wolf dogs' lonely wail
Instead of the birds in a leafy dale.
And the short gray day and the long dark night
Return again in Time's swift flight;
Yet little we care how they come and go,
For the heart alone makes Spring, we know.

St. Patrick's Day Toast

(Given at the St. Patrick's Day Banquet, Held by the Knights of Robert Emmet in Nome, March 17, 1908)

WE'LL drink, in White Alaska,
To the Green of the Emerald Isle,
Where men are brave and maids are fair,
And nature seems to smile.

We'll drink to the Irish rover,
Who drifts toward the Frozen Pole,
Or toils in the heat of the Tropics,
Yet is Irish, heart and soul.

We'll drink to Robert Emmet
And the cause he knew was right.
We'll drink to peace with honor,
Or the chance for an honest fight.
Then we'll drink to good St. Patrick
And what he did at Home
In keeping snakes from the Irish
May he do for his sons in Nome!

A Friend

Sometimes when life has gone wrong with you,
And the world seems a dreary place,
Has your dog ever silently crept to your feet,
His yearning eyes turned to your face,—
Has he made you feel that he understands,
And all that he asks of you
Is to share your lot, be it good or ill,
With a chance to be loyal and true?
Are you branded a failure? He does not know—
A sinner? He does not care—
You're "Master" to him—that's all that counts—
A word, and his day is fair.
Your birth and your station are nothing to him;
A Palace and Hut are the same—
And his love is yours, in honor and peace,
And it's yours through disaster or shame.
Though others forget you, and pass you by,
He is ever your Faithful Friend—
Who is ready to give you the best that is his,
Unselfishly, unto the End.

The Little Tin Bucket

(Written on the S. S. Victoria, September, 1908, En Route for Nome, for an Entertainment)

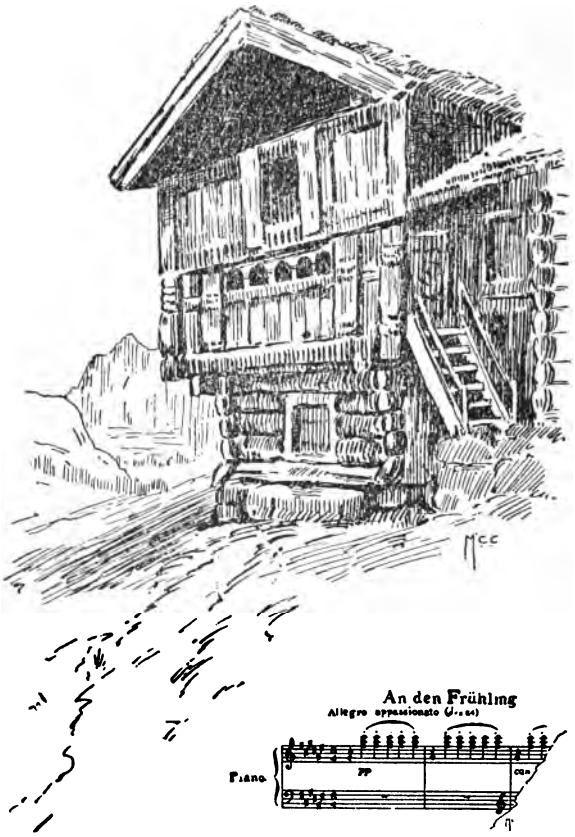
MY thoughts often turn to the sea trips I've taken,
When firmly my feet press the good solid earth,
And my heart turns in thanks to that modest contrivance,
The little tin bucket that hangs on the berth—
The square covered bucket, the clinging brown bucket,
The friendly tin bucket that hangs on the berth.

It shared all my sorrows when shipmates forsook me,
And went off to ponder on life's paltry worth.
It clung through my moans and my groans and my curses,
Nor left when I violently plunged from the berth.
The square covered bucket, the clinging brown bucket,
The friendly tin bucket that hangs on the berth.

It hints not of roses, nor Araby's spices,
Nor comforts of Home nor a warm cheerful hearth,

But modestly nestles beneath the dark curtain
That shuts out the world from the gloom of your berth.
The square covered bucket, the clinging brown bucket,
The friendly tin bucket that hangs on the berth.

'Tis plain, and 'tis humble, and asks not remembrance,
When life's rosy moments are filled full of mirth—
But it shares both your bed and your board uncomplaining,
In all the drear days that you spend in your berth.
The square covered bucket, the clinging brown bucket,
The friendly tin bucket that hangs on the berth.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Toast to Norway

A toast from Nome to Norway,—
  The new North to the old—
To that land of countless beauties,
  From this far bleak land of gold.

To the land of crags and torrents,
  Of the Fjords that darkly lie,
Where the pine clad mountains tower,
  And the snow line meets the sky.

To the land of matchless Stallheim,
  Of Trondhjem, quaint and old,
Christiania, gay and modern,
  And the North Cape dark and bold.

To the land of Grieg, whose music
  Can bring to the weary heart
The thrill of Norway's springtime,
  With the touch of his magic art.

To the land where a mighty master
  Stripped with his skillful pen
The shams from the modern drama,
  And dealt with the souls of men.

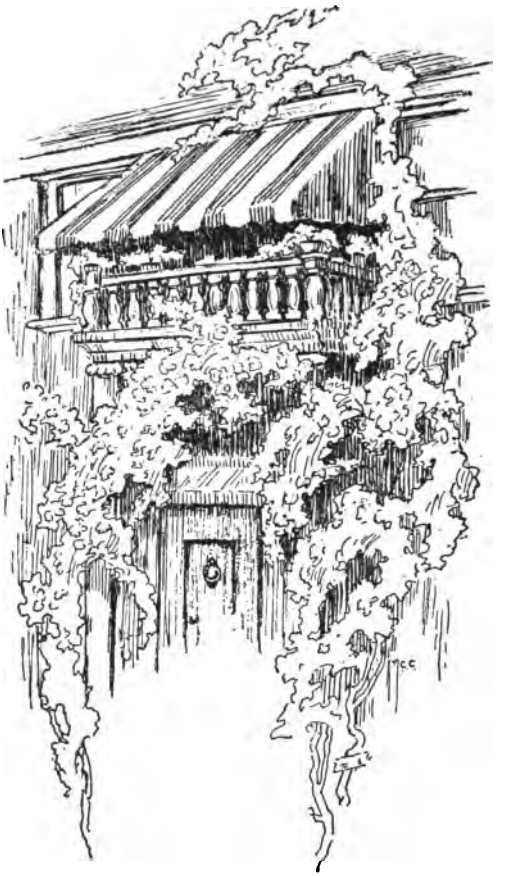
To the land of the Ancient Vikings,
To the land our Hosts call Home—
We drink a toast to Norway—
With her loyal sons in Nome!

Lest You Forget

When under brighter skies in sunnier climes,
  Perchance beneath your fig tree and your vine,
Your mind may sometimes wander back to Nome,
  And conjure up the days of Auld Lang Syne.

The perfect Junes, the bitter Arctic nights
  May linger, as some half-forgotten line,
Or strain of music that is far and faint,
Yet brings back haunting thoughts of Auld Lang
      Syne.

But this we ask—what else may be forgot,
  That in your heart you keep a little shrine
Where we, who met you in this distant land,
  May hold a happy place for Auld Lang Syne.



Down in Virginia

(Recited in Nome by a Virginian. Quoted from Memory)

The roses nowhere bloom so white
  As in Virginia;
The sunshine nowhere is so bright
  As in Virginia;
The flowers nowhere smell so sweet,
And nowhere hearts so lightly beat,
For Heaven and Earth do seem to meet
  Down in Virginia.

There nowhere is a land so fair
  As old Virginia;
So full of song, so free of care
  As old Virginia;
And when my time shall come to die,
Just take me back and let me lie
Close where the James goes rolling by,
  Down in Virginia.

The days are nowhere quite so long
  As in Virginia;
So free of care, so full of song,
  As in Virginia;
And I believe the Happy Land,
The Lord prepared for Mortal Man,
Is built exactly on the plan
  Of old Virginia.

Up in Alaska

The snow is nowhere quite so white
  As in Alaska;
And nowhere shine the stars so bright
  As in Alaska.
The days are nowhere quite so gray,
The nights are nowhere quite so gay,
For Heaven's forgot, and Hell's to pay,
  Up in Alaska.

And nowhere is the gold so pure
  As in Alaska.
The people—well, we're not so sure—
  Up in Alaska;
But when I cross the Great Divide,
I only hope that by my side
Will stand some comrades true and tried,
  As these up in Alaska.

The Malamutes wail loud and long
  Up in Alaska;
It is the Arctic slumber song
  Up in Alaska.
But joy comes fast and shadows flee,
The winters fly in mirth and glee,
For nowhere flows the Hootch so free
  As in Alaska.

And when we've left this barren shore,
  Up in Alaska,
Perchance to come to Nome no more,
  Up in Alaska,
We'll often say, "Here's one on me,"
To those old friends on Bering Sea,
Good luck to all—where they may be,
  Up in Alaska.

Merry Christmas

(For Christmas Cards)

There is speeding to you o'er the long white trail
A heavy load by this dog team mail—
A load of wishes for Christmas cheer,
And the best of luck for the coming year.
The hope of joys without an end,
And a load of love from your absent friend.

Santa Claus

Have you very often wondered,
When good Santa Claus is due,
Just where he lives and what he does,
And how he hears of you?
He hears because a station,
As installed by Uncle Sam,
Now brings us all important news
By wireless telegram.
And when he learns how good you've been,
All through the past long year,
He fills his sled quite full of things,
And calls his fleet reindeer.
So if any one should ask you
Where old Santa has his home,
You can say it's in Alaska,
And his address there is Nome.

A Christmas Carol

I am sending this Christmas Carol,
And it carries my wishes true,
That all of the good and happy things
May be given to yours and you.

I can send you no scarlet holly,
Nor a wreath of mistletoe,
To bear you the season's greetings
From this land of ice and snow.

And we have no Robin red-breasts,
With voices like silver flutes,
So with love I am sending a Carol,
As sung by our Malamutes.

A Wish

May your life be as full of brightness
  As Alaska's long June days,
When at midnight the sun just sinks to rest,
  But leaves us his golden rays.

May your troubles and sorrows be shorter
  Than our brief December days,
When our noon, like a ghostly twilight,
  Is shrouded in soft gray haze.

May your skies be as clear and starry
  As those of our Arctic nights,
And illumined with mystic splendor
  Like the glory of Northern Lights.

The Trail Song

(Sung to the Air of "The Handicap March" by the Children of the Nome Grammar School)

There are songs of the South where the tall palm
stands,
And the desert is wild and wide,
Where the camels stalk o'er the burning sands,
And the Arabs swiftly ride.
There are songs of the Western cowboys bold,
Of the East and its caravans quaint and old,
But give to me the frozen sea,
And the song of the Long White Trail.

Away we go, o'er ice and snow,
For a spin on the Long White Trail,—
And little we care if cold winds blow,
Or the day be bright and fair—
With a steady grasp of the handle bar,
'Neath the winter's sun and the Polar Star,
Our hearts never quail, our dogs never fail,
And the Trail stretches free and far.

For this land, vast and grand, this land of the Midnight Sun,
Has the finest sport that the world has seen—
A sport that takes courage and judgment keen—
And the flying feet of our teams so fleet,
As they speed o'er the trails on a run,
Plainly show, as they go, there's danger as well as fun.
For it's "Gee" and it's "Haw" and it's "Put, put, put,"
Over a bump or rut,
With a steady grip and a cracking whip,
Past town or native hut,
There's the sound of yells and cheery bells,
And the cry of "Mush, Mush, Mush,"
On they go, never slow, the men and the dogs in a rush.

Chorus

Alaska's the place where the dogs set a pace,
That startles the world outside.
They do not dream, with a little dog team,
We can take a jolly joy-ride,
Like a lightning flash, away we dash,
Over the hill and dale.
We're off, we're off, for our spin upon the Trail.

Christmas Night in Nome

It was Christmas night, and the holly,
In the softly shaded light,
Gave the season's touch to the festive board,
And a scene that was gay and bright.

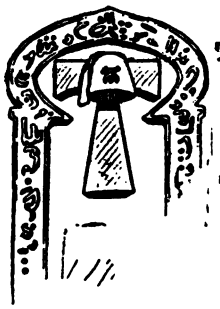
And the silver and crystal gleaming,
And the laughter so cheery and free,
Made us all forget we were exiles here,
On the shore of Bering Sea.

And our thoughts unfettered crossed frozen wastes,
From the darkness of ice-bound Nome,
As we spoke of those distant places
That at heart we still call Home.

And standing, we drank to the Absent Ones,
And we pledged, in bumpers of wine,
The health of our friends so far away—
And the days of Auld Lang Syne.

Es Selamu Aleikum

(When Nile Temple, Nobels of the Mystic Shrine, Made a Pilgrimage to Nome in 1909, They Were Presented with a Key of Nome Gold and the Freedom of the City)



To you who rest a moment in our midst,
As pilgrims to the shore of Bering Sea,
The portals of our hearts we open wide,
And give you entrance with this Golden Key.

What though we dwell beneath the Northern Lights,
You come to us from sunnier, summer lands
To sing the glories of the Southern Cross,
And guide our footsteps o'er the Burning Sands.

With you we stand before the Mystic Shrine;
Its splendid visions fill our eager eyes,
Of Sultan's mosque and slender minaret,
And Houri's gardens where the moonlight lies.

Forgotten is the wolf dog's lonely cry—
The white and silent trail, the boundless snows;
A Mecca of Alaska you have made,
Where thoughts of you shall blossom as the rose.

Please Allah that some day our broad Yukon
May be, with temples, like your mighty Nile,
And grant that many a Shriner's Caravan
May come and tarry with us here a while.

Search, if you will, the tents of Bedouin Sheiks—
And meet the Arab in his desert home—
You find no truer welcome than we give,
Nor warmer hearts than beat in Arctic Nome.

The King of the Trail

When the sons of Bonnie Scotland feel the call of
sport or duty,
On the shore of fair Loch Lomond or on frozen
Bering Sea,
You will find some tale heroic, one of pluck or iron
endurance,
That will rouse the pride of Scotsmen in their "ain
countrie."

Far away from crag and heather, to this drear and
icebound Northland,
Scotland sends to White Alaska men whose
staunchness does not fail.
So a toast to "Scotty" Allan, who has proved his
grit and courage,
And is known the wide world over as the King
of the Arctic Trail!

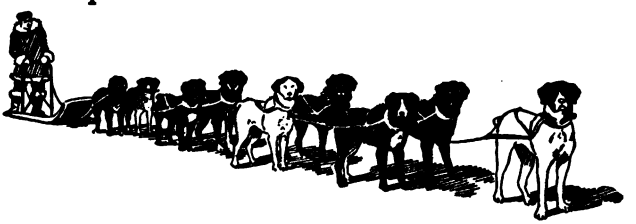
My Pupmobile

I've ridden on a camel where the
tall and stately palm,
Stands sentry to the Desert's
burning sand;

Used a gondola in Venice, and a
rickshaw in Japan;
Breasted breakers on Hawaiia's
coral strand;

I have traveled on a burro through
the mountains of New Spain;
Sailed the Tropic Seas upon an
even keel;

But for sport, give me Alaska with
its white and silent trails,
And a spin behind my Racing
Pupmobile.



The Alaska Forget-Me-Not

(Written for the Closing Exercises of the Nome Grammar School after the Society of Alaska Pioneers had Chosen the Forget-Me-Not as the State Flower of Alaska)

In this far away Alaska,
With its deep and trackless snows,
Winter comes so very quickly,
And so very slowly goes,
That the fair and fleeting summer
Is a dream of brief delight,
With its air so soft and balmy
And its days so long and bright.

And it seems as if to pay us
For the gray months bleak and cold,
That the smallest, simplest blossoms
Here some rare new charms unfold;
And of all these welcome flowers
Answering to the sun's warm glow,
There are none that touch the heart strings
Like "Forget-Me-Nots," I know.

So, in looking for an emblem
For our Empire of the North,
We will choose this azure flower
That the sunny hours bring forth.

For we want men to remember
That Alaska's here to stay,
Though she slept unknown for ages,
And awakened in a day.

And we want them to remember,
Though her heart is one of gold,
There are many other treasures
That she offers to unfold.
She has men of brawn and muscle;
She has men of brain and fire,
Who will help to win her honors
And achieve her soul's desire.

She has women who have followed
Where the brave frontiersmen roam,
Who are sure that where the heart is,
There can always be a home.
And Alaska has her children,
Who no fairer land have known,
Yet the love of our whole country
In each little mind is sown.

So we want to tell the nation
That the mines and golden sands
Yield no richer, surer fortune
Than our loyal hearts and hands.
And although they say we're living
In the "Land that God forgot"—
We'll recall Alaska to them
With our blue Forget-Me-Not.

A Growl from Nome

(Written in 1911 in Answer to a Poem Called "Derby Day in the Yukon," by "Yukon Bill")

Now, I ain't very keen on these poetry chaps,
  And there's mighty few poets I kin read—
But Dunham and Service jest hit me right,
  For they tell o' the things I've seed.

They might sound queer to the folks outside,
  Onnatural and wild-like, too—
Though the tales, God knows, in this Northern Land
  Ain't never too strange to be true.

When I've read all kinds of Alaska stuff
  That's printed in poems or a book,
And I see how the plain facks is twisted,
  I says, "It's poetic license they've took."

But I jest struck some verses by "Yukon Bill,"
  And I've got to butt into the game,
For he ain't no poet, and the license he's took
  Would put Annanias to shame.

He calls the Sweepstakes "The Yukon Race
  That brings the Yukon fame,"
And his ignorance is somethin' fierce
  When he tries to describe the same.

Now, them Yukon towns ain't put up a cent
  Toward the purse o' this here event,
And them Yukon sports never put in a team
  Though an invite was often sent.

So it makes us sore when "Yukon Bill"
  Talks o' "Yukon Derby Day,"
And tries to tell, what he never knowed,
  In a foolish kind o' way.

He speaks of a dead dog throwed to the wolves—
  Though it's one o' the rules o' the race
That every dog, alive or dead,
  Must be brought to the startin' place.

He says that they never pause for food,
  Nor give the poor brutes a drink—
And lash them and whip them, till bloody and blind,
  They stiffen and stagger and sink.

Now, "Yukon Bill" is a trustin' chap
  If he heer'd and believed sech a lie,
But he's got his nerve to put it in print
  For Nome folks to read and deny.

For we're proud o' the way that the men and the dogs
Come through all the hardships they face,
When they speed four hundred and eight long miles
In this wonderful Northern race.

I've seed every start since the year it begun,
And I've seed every finish, too—
So although I'm some shy on this poetry stunt,
You can bank on my words bein' true.

Five times the Kennel Club green and gold
Has fluttered so bright and gay,
And each team's colors has decked its friends
On our April Racing Day.

And the throngs has surged through the narrow streets,
In sunshine or howlin' gale,
To wait for the thrill of each trumpet call,
When the men and the dogs hit the trail.

And the cheers that ring in the mushers' ears
Are the cheers that come from the heart—
For the bets you've made jest fade from your mind;
They are favorites all, at the start.

And then, when the last team is out o' sight
  And everyone's under a spell,
There's nothin' kin rouse them from tales o' dogs
  But the sound o' the telephone bell.

And every soul in the whole blame burg,
  From Grandma to Angel Child,
Is askin' "Central" to give 'em "dope,"
  And the "dope" comes fast and wild.

And it comes for three whole days and nights,
  And "Yukon" for once spoke well
When he said that nothin' could touch this race
  In the whole wide world, or Hell.

Our eatin' is done when the news is slack,
  As for sleep—well, we don't get none—
For we sit at the 'phone and hear how each team
  Is a makin' that "terrible run."

How them "staggerin' brutes" o' "Yukon Bill's"
  Is a gettin' their alcohol rub,
And a massage, too, and a downy bed,
  And their fill o' wholesome grub.

How Dalzene talks to his weary team,
  And tells 'em with tears in his eyes
That they won't have to run up to Candle again,
  No matter how big is the prize.

And care, why when Scotty at Baker's
  Was a-thought to be takin' a nap,
He was rubbin' the frost from McMillan's feet,
  And a holdin' Mc's head in his lap.

Of course, we know that the race is hard,
For everything is that's worth while—
But freighters is often in far worse shape
  When they've gone barely fifty mile.

"Bill" says when the race is all over,
  That the dogs has no honor in Nome—
And the winners, neglected on bar-room floors,
  Lies gaspin' and covered with foam.

I'd jest like to show to this Yukon poet
  How the racers get pettin' and care,
And is fed upon food that would give a few points
  To a Yukon Hotel Bill o' Fare.

And he speaks o' the drinkin' and orgies,
  When the contest is turned to a feast—
And he says that there's brawlin' and fightin'
  Till you can't tell a man from a beast.

Now, the camps, "Bill" knows, may be full o' sech
      sports,
  But here, when the racers come home,

The men is Men, and the dogs is Friends—
  And there's pride in 'em both in Nome.

When the boom o' the gun at Fort Davis
  Tells the news that the winner is near,
With the whistles and bells all a ringin',
  There's the sound of a rousin' cheer.

A cheer for the man who has conquered,
  For the dogs that has set the pace
O' strength and speed, at their masters' need,
  In Alaska's Sweepstakes Race.

And there's honor and praise awaitin'—
  For, whether they win or fail,
They're Heroes all, in the eyes o' the North,
  For their pluck on the Arctic Trail.

These here are the facks—and I hope "Yukon Bill"
  When he busts into poetry next time,
Will tackle some country a long ways off,
  Or put somethin' he knows of in rhyme.

Songs of the Sea

(Written for an Entertainment on the S. S. Senator, off Sledge Island, in a Storm, October, 1909)

Oh, don't you think that you could hurl
  Into a watery grave,
The fool who gaily pictured life
  "Upon the ocean wave."

And he who penned the verses
  All about the "deep blue sea,"
Ah! would that he were with us now,
  Beneath Sledge Island's lee.

And with him, too, the fiend who wrote
  "The Cradle of the Deep,"
Be sure we'd see that he "in peace"
  Did not "lie down to sleep."

I know some farmer voiced that rot
  About the "billowy main,"
Who never trod a deck nor strayed
  Beyond the "billowy grain."

As for the famous idiot,
  Who when he wrote of snow,
Could call it naught but "beautiful,"
  We hope he roasts below.

At first it seems that sudden death
Is all that fits the crime
Of those who put such lies in songs
Or make them into rhyme—

But that, I fear, is far too mild—
They should be forced to roam
From now until Hell freezes o'er,
Between the Sound and Nome.

Metempsychosis

In the gray of the Arctic twilight,
  As close by my side she lies,
I ponder the fathomless mystery
That broods in my wolf dog's eyes.

She is gentle, yet fiercely loving—
  She is jealous and stealthy and wise,
As ever she watches and guards me,
  With a yearning that never dies.

Together we've crossed the frozen wastes,
  We have breasted the howling gale,
We have seen the glory of Northern Lights;
  Together we've starved on the Trail.

Is there something that holds her to me,
  Some secret I cannot know,
An expiation of crime or wrong
  That happened long ages ago?

Is there bound in this wolf dog's body
  The soul of some woman of old,
Who lived and loved, and betrayed, perchance,
  When her love was growing cold?

The soul of some passionate princess,
  Who dwelt where the Desert sand
Sweeps down to the banks of the templed Nile
  In that sun-warmed Lotus Land?

Or the soul of an Indian Nautch girl,
  Who trampled the hearts of men
Into dust, 'neath her slender and jeweled feet,
  And for this, is she living again?

Or is it some spirit that drained to the dregs
  The wine from the full cup of life,
And left the Hemlock for others to quaff,
  Laughing lightly at ruin and strife?

And who was I in those centuries gone,
  And what was her guilt to me,
That makes her my dumb and willing slave,
  In the North by the frozen sea?

If mine was the sorrow and hers was the sin,
  And all that is now had to be,
Whatever her debt, she has paid it in full,
  And her prisoned soul shall be free.

And I wonder if some time, in ages to come,
  Will the ghosts of this dead past arise,
Shall I know then the mystery that broods today
  In my faithful wolf dog's eyes?

Nome

There lies on the shore of a frozen
sea,
All wrapped in a mantle of drifted
snow,
A little town on a dreary beach
Where the icy winds from the
Arctic blow.
Where the White Trails lead to the Great Outside,
Where the ghostly glow of the Northern Lights
Gives way to a summer, as brief as fair,
To be banished again by the cold bleak nights.
Yet no matter how rare are the scenes I view,
How lovely the spot I may call my Home,
As the compass needle will turn to the North,
So my heart ever turns to distant Nome.

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MAR 23 1918